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Natural Resources Conservation Service

203 – Human Resources (HR) Assistant
Career Guide

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Introduction

NRCS Career Guides

Career Guides enable employees to explore the different types of competencies that are required within the occupational series, the level of proficiency required at each grade level, and available learning and development resources to pursue their career goals.

Career Guides include:
- A description of the occupations within the occupational family
- A crosswalk of the applicable supervisory and non-supervisory grade levels for each occupation in the occupational family
- Descriptions of foundational, leadership and management, and occupation-specific competencies for the occupation
- Required education and experience for the occupation, as applicable
- Target competency proficiency levels for the occupation at each grade level
- A sample list of learning and development opportunities linked to each competency

Together, these elements help employees make informed decisions about their careers at NRCS.

The Career Guides are not intended to be all encompassing, but rather to give users an overview of each job and available developmental opportunities within NRCS.

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Human Resources Group Description

An occupational family consists of jobs with similarities in their nature of work, required knowledge, and competencies that enable success. The HR Assistant occupation is part of the Human Resources Group. Jobs in the Human Resources Group are responsible for advising on, administering, supervising, or performing work involved in the various phases of human resources management, as well as employee development, training, and instructional design. The table below presents a description of each NRCS occupation within this job family; the HR Assistant occupation is highlighted.

Job	Description
201 – HR Specialist	This series includes positions that manage, supervise, administer, advise on, or deliver HR management products or services. At NRCS, an employee in this series specializes in of the following areas, also known as a parenthetical: • Workforce Strategy • Labor and Employee Relations • Recruitment and Staffing • HR Data Management • Employee Benefits • HR Policy • Performance Management and Recognition • Employee Development • Change Management • Classification and Position Management • Special Emphasis Programs
203 – HR Assistant	This series includes positions that supervise, lead, or perform HR assistance work requiring substantial knowledge of HR terminology, requirements, procedures, operations, functions, and regulatory policy and procedural requirements applicable to HR transactions.
1712 – Training Specialist	This series includes positions that supervise, lead, or perform work related to training program development, evaluation, or instruction using a combination of knowledge of the methods and techniques of instruction and practical knowledge of the subject-matter being taught.
1750 – Instructional Systems Specialist	This series includes positions that administer, supervise, advise on, design, develop, or provide educational or training services in formal education or training programs by applying knowledge of learning theory and the principles, methods, practices and techniques.

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Crosswalk of Grade Levels

This table reflects the General Schedule (GS) grades associated with the job series within NRCS's Human Resources Group. Both supervisory and non-supervisory positions are represented.

	201 – HR Specialist	203 – HR Assistant	1712 – Training Specialist	1750 – Instructional Systems Specialist
Supervisory	GS 15			GS 15
	GS 14			GS 14
	GS 13		GS 13	GS 13
Non-Supervisory	GS 14			GS 14
	GS 13		GS 13	GS 13
	GS 12		GS 12	GS 12
	GS 11		GS 11	GS 11
	GS 09	GS 09	GS 09	GS 09
	GS 08	GS 08		
	GS 07	GS 07	GS 07	
	GS 06	GS 06		
	GS 05	GS 05		

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Foundational Competencies

Foundational competencies are required for success across all NRCS occupations and grade levels.

Foundational Competencies	Associated Work Behaviors
Attention to Detail *Performs work in a thorough and conscientious manner, ensuring that work products and services provided are accurate and complete.* Learning and Development Resources	• Checks work to ensure it is accurate, thorough, and meets applicable policies, standards/specifications, or other guidelines. • Evaluates information or data to assess accuracy, relevance, and completeness. • Identifies errors or inconsistencies and takes action to correct them, bringing them to the attention of decision-makers and/or relevant others when necessary.
Accountability *Accepts and assumes responsibility for one's own actions, words, products, and decisions and/or those of the group, team, or division.* Learning and Development Resources	• Takes responsibility for accomplishing work goals and meeting deadlines. • Ensures timely and accurate products and deliverables. • Complies with established control systems, including relevant laws, standards, guidelines, policies, and rules.
Organizing & Prioritizing Work *Plans work, sets priorities, and determines short- and/or long-term goals and strategies to achieve them; monitors progress toward goals, evaluates outcomes, and makes appropriate adjustments.* Learning and Development Resources	• Analyzes workload and establishes priorities and timelines. • Formulates an approach to achieve work tasks, established goals, and organizational objectives. • Directs and/or redirects efforts as necessary to meet deadlines and goals. • Monitors progress towards the achievement of goals.

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Representing the Agency *Represents USDA/NRCS and Agency interests when dealing with others; interacts with internal and external parties in a professional manner.* Learning and Development Resources	• Interacts and shares information with outside parties in a manner that reflects positively on the Agency. • Enhances trust and credibility of the Agency and its mission through professional interactions with others. • Represents NRCS in meetings, conferences, and other engagements with individuals and members of other organizations. • Establishes an understanding of NRCS' position on and policies toward natural resources conservation issues.
Resource Management *Identifies, obtains, maintains, secures, distributes, and utilizes resources (e.g., material, equipment, space, money, time) in order to support the Agency's workforce and achieve goals and objectives.* Learning and Development Resources	• Maintains an awareness of available resources (e.g., material, equipment, space, money, time). • Identifies, requests, obtains, and/or approves needed resources required to accomplish work activities or projects. • Maintains, secures, and/or distributes available resources (e.g., material, equipment, space). • Protects resources to ensure the prevention of fraud, waste, and abuse. • Appropriately documents obtaining, using, and disposing of resources.
Technology Management *Keeps up-to-date on technological developments, making effective use of technology and related technical resources to achieve results; ensures security of technology and computing systems.* Learning and Development Resources	• Maintains an awareness of available technological resources and the process for accessing these resources. • Plans for, acquires, organizes, and prioritizes technology and technical resources to accomplish the Agency's mission and objectives. • Uses appropriate and available tools or technology to perform work activities. • Safeguards technology to ensure the prevention of fraud, waste, or abuse.

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Organizational Awareness *Knows the Agency's vision, mission, functions, and organizational structure; understands how the Agency's social, political, and technological systems work and operates effectively within them.* Learning and Development Resources	• Demonstrates an understanding of the Agency's vision, mission, functions, organizational structure, and systems. • Demonstrates an understanding of how relevant organizational systems and processes work and operates effectively within them. • Demonstrates an understanding of one's own role within the Agency's mission and structure. • Demonstrates an understanding of conservation and the importance of partnerships. • Demonstrates an understanding of intra-Agency staff relationships.
Adaptability & Flexibility *Adapts behavior or work methods in response to new information, changing conditions, or unexpected obstacles; is open to and effectively deals with ambiguity.* Learning and Development Resources	• Adjusts plans and/or priorities to adapt to new information or changing situations in order to achieve work goals and objectives. • Anticipates and addresses obstacles using both established and innovative methods. • Effectively copes with ambiguity and progresses with work activities under uncertain conditions.
Continuous Learning *Assesses and recognizes own strengths and weaknesses; acquires knowledge and skills through training, feedback, mentoring, or other opportunities for professional development and then applies new knowledge and skills to achieve work outcomes.* Learning and Development Resources	• Identifies when it is necessary to acquire new knowledge and skills. • Stays up-to-date and acquires new knowledge and skills by participating in training and other learning activities. • Contributes to work outcomes by maintaining expertise and applying new knowledge and skills obtained.

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Initiative *Displays self-motivation and commitment toward completing assignments in a timely manner; seeks out additional work assignments and responsibilities.* Learning and Development Resources	• Proactively identifies and understands issues relevant to assignments. • Takes the lead in getting tasks done with limited or no prompting or direction. • Demonstrates a willingness to accept new or additional assignments and responsibilities. • Seeks out new opportunities within Agency or with outside groups/partners, following established protocols.
Integrity & Honesty *Maintains the integrity of the Agency by displaying ethical conduct and honesty; understands the impact of violating ethical standards on the Agency, self, and others.* Learning and Development Resources	• Demonstrates integrity and honesty in dealings with parties internal and external to USDA/NRCS (e.g., coworkers, peers, customers, partners). • Displays high standard of ethical conduct and understands how violating the Agency's ethical standards can impact the Agency, self, and others. • Chooses an ethical course of action and does the right thing even when faced with opposition. • Identifies and reports ethical violations and holds others accountable for their actions.
Stress Tolerance & Resilience *Deals effectively with stressful and challenging situations; persists at tasks to achieve Agency outcomes despite interruptions, obstacles, or setbacks.* Learning and Development Resources	• Manages own work stress in a constructive manner so that it does not impede the work of self or others. • Deals professionally with, and is respectful toward, individuals or parties in difficult and/or tense situations. • Models calm, focused, and professional behavior when facing stressful situations and individuals. • Persists at tasks despite interruptions, obstacles, or setbacks.

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Oral Communication *Verbally expresses information to individuals or groups in a clear and understandable manner; takes into account the audience and nature of the information; actively listens to and considers input/feedback from others.* Learning and Development Resources	• Verbally communicates in a clear, concise, and articulate manner. • Actively listens and responds to the questions, ideas, and concerns of others. • Tailors oral communication (e.g., language, tone, technical/legal detail, level of specificity) to the audience's level of understanding. • Makes oral presentations, responding to questions and adapting to unforeseen circumstances. • Actively responds to nonverbal cues when communicating with others and adjusts communication appropriately.
Written Communication *Communicates written information and ideas in a concise and organized manner taking into account the audience and nature of the information; uses correct mode, tone, grammar, punctuation, and spelling and conforms to style and format guidelines.* Learning and Development Resources	• Writes in an accurate, clear, concise, and well-organized manner. • Tailors written communication for internal and external use (e.g., language, tone, detail, level of specificity) to the audience's level of understanding and to the communication medium. • Reviews and edits written materials for content and intended purpose, correctly identifying and correcting errors. • Interacts in written correspondence by reading, acting on, and responding appropriately in a timely manner.
Influence & Negotiating *Positively persuades others to accept recommendations, cooperate, or change their behavior; works with others to find mutually acceptable solutions.* Learning and Development Resources	• Negotiates with others to reach mutually acceptable agreements, settlements, or solutions that build or improve respectful working relationships. • Convinces individuals or groups to take a particular course of action, resolve conflicts, or accept findings, recommendations, changes, or alternative viewpoints. • Clearly and persuasively presents ideas and concepts in a manner that gains commitment and/or agreement from others.

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Conflict Management *Recognizes and works to manage and resolve conflicts (i.e., grievances, confrontations, disagreements) in a constructive manner in order to minimize negative personal or organizational impact.* [Learning and Development Resources](#)	• Works with individuals, groups, or agencies to resolve disagreements or conflicts in a positive and constructive manner. • Understands and/or anticipates potential areas of conflict and takes steps to prevent counter-productive confrontations and conflict. • Utilizes a variety of methods, procedures, and resources, both internal and external, to provide mediation and resolution.
Interpersonal Skills *Shows respect, courtesy, professionalism, and tact when working with others; develops and maintains working relationships with a wide variety of individuals from varied backgrounds; considers individual differences and diversity.* [Learning and Development Resources](#)	• Develops constructive, professional working relationships with others across different work units, groups, agencies, or boundaries. • Adjusts interpersonal style, as needed, to interact with different individuals. • Respects and understands individual differences and diversity by treating everyone fairly and professionally. • Deals diplomatically and tactfully with internal or external parties at all times.
Teamwork *Encourages and facilitates cooperation and trust among all team members; contributes to or fosters commitment and team spirit; works with others to achieve goals.* [Learning and Development Resources](#)	• Shares information and knowledge and works collaboratively with other members to achieve desired goals. • Seeks and integrates diverse perspectives from coworkers, peers, customers, partners, and stakeholders. • Contributes to an atmosphere that fosters cooperation, integration, trust, team spirit, and goal accomplishment. • Solicits others' input to foster shared understanding of priorities, needs, perspectives, and concerns.

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Creativity & Innovation *Develops new insights into situations and applies innovative solutions to problems; suggests new methods where methods and procedures may be outdated, inapplicable, inefficient, or unavailable.* Learning and Development Resources	• Identifies and utilizes innovative or creative methods and solutions to accomplish work, where appropriate. • Designs and develops alternative concepts, solutions, courses of action, and strategies to address issues and problems where established methods have proven inadequate, unsuccessful, or are unavailable. • Interprets and applies policies, procedures, and methods in an innovative, non-standard manner, within policy and procedure guidelines.
Decisive Judgment & Decision Making *Makes sound, informed, objective, and timely decisions; perceives the impact and implications of decisions; follows through on decisions to accomplish work goals even in uncertain situations.* Learning and Development Resources	• Makes informed decisions or recommendations without deferring action when decisions need to be made. • Develops and implements responses or solutions to problems while considering implications of decision. • Takes action in order to accomplish work objectives even in ambiguous or unclear situations.
Information Management *Knows where or how to gather information; identifies need for and organizes and maintains information or information management systems.* Learning and Development Resources	• Gathers and records information or data to accomplish work tasks. • Integrates, develops, and prioritizes information resources to accomplish work objectives. • Develops and implements procedures and strategies to organize, manage, and safeguard information. • Takes necessary steps to ensure information is relevant, accurate, current, and complete, filling in gaps and resolving ambiguities as needed. • Safeguards privileged, sensitive but unclassified (SBU), and Personally Identifiable Information (PII).

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Problem Solving *Identifies problems and determines accuracy and relevance of information; uses sound judgment to generate and evaluate alternatives; makes recommendations and applies solutions.* [Learning and Development Resources](#)	• Identifies and defines issues, problems, opportunities, or emerging trends. • Recognizes the relevance of a variety of issues and/or problems and questions underlying assumptions. • Collects, analyzes, and integrates relevant information or data to draw conclusions. • Recognizes, produces, and/or evaluates alternative solutions to problems. • Makes recommendations to remove obstacles and applies solutions as necessary.
Customer Service *Seeks to understand the needs of internal and external customers; delivers products and services that meet customer needs/objectives; is committed to continuous improvement and providing high quality products and services; communicates with customers to improve processes and provides updates on the delivery of services.* [Learning and Development Resources](#)	• Communicates with customers to understand issues, define requirements, assess their needs, and obtain feedback. • Provides products, services, and advice to customers that meet their needs/objectives and are in accordance with applicable guidelines, policy, and regulations. • Offers ideas, solutions, technologies, or methods to meet customer needs based on understanding of desired outcomes/goals. • Strives to meet and manage customer expectations. • Keeps customers informed of issues, changes, or problems; anticipates and resolves problems or issues.

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Occupation-specific Requirements: 203 – HR Assistant

HR Assistant Education/Experience Requirements

There are no occupation-specific education or experience requirements for this series.

HR Assistant Occupation-specific Competencies

Occupation-specific competencies are the technical competencies required for success within a given occupation or occupational family.

In addition to NRCS's HR-related Learning and Development Resources, you can explore courses and other career development opportunities offered through OPM's HR University (HRU). The OPM HRU mission is to cultivate a culture of continuous learning and excellence for Federal HR professionals by providing career guidance, training and resources to achieve a consistently high level of technical, consulting, business and professional competency.

Occupational Competencies	Associated Work Behaviors
Classification and Position Management *Analyzes positions and determines their appropriate pay system, occupational grouping, title, and pay grade; provides advice and guidance related to position management, organizational design and structuring of positions.* Learning and Development Resources	• Analyzes positions, job families, job series, and/or functions to identify relevant functional requirements. • Classifies and prepares necessary documentation for positions in accordance with OPM classification standards. • Conducts desk audits for a variety of positions. • Provides position management and classification advice to employees and managers. • Initiates and/or participates in the classification appeals adjudication process.

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Employee Development *Plans, administers, and evaluates employee development programs and training designed to educate, train, and/or develop employees so that they may more ably perform their current or future assigned duties.* Learning and Development Resources	• Conducts training needs assessments to identify employee, group, and organizational development needs. • Creates and/or delivers employee development and training opportunities to address gaps in existing employee development and training programs. • Develops and maintains core curriculum. • Evaluates training vendors based on feedback from attendees and managers. • Evaluates the impact of employee development and training programs to include knowledge transfer and application to the job. • Assists in the development of, and tracks, individual development plans (IDPs).
Workforce Planning *The process of making data-driven decisions that determine workload projections, staffing needs, and current and future competency gaps to align human resources strategy with organizational goals, and maintains awareness of existing and future organizational needs, including succession planning needs.* Learning and Development Resources	• Analyzes trends (e.g., demographic, diversity, attrition) and identifies current and future staffing needs to meet mission requirements. • Conducts internal (i.e., organizational) and external labor market analysis to identify availability of critical competencies and skills. • Conducts workload analyses to project staffing needs. • Recommends specific organizational changes to address staffing, workload, and resource gaps. • Develops and implements succession plans.
Labor Relations *Negotiates and administers labor agreements.* Learning and Development Resources	• Processes grievance cases, ensuring all parties involved adhere to applicable laws, standards, and guidelines. • Represents management in arbitration, mediation, and negotiations. • Provides advice and guidance to employees and managers on related case details and labor relations issues. • Keeps abreast of new labor relation laws, rulings, and decisions.

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Employee Relations *Provides advice and guidance on conduct, performance issues, grievances, and disciplinary and adverse actions.* Learning and Development Resources	• Assists in resolving disputes between employees and supervisors. • Explains rules and procedures to employees and managers to help them understand their rights and responsibilities. • Advises supervisors and managers on resolutions of employee relations issues (i.e., counseling, letter of warning, disciplinary actions, performance improvement plans). • Researches and prepares letters and action notices related to employee conduct issues. • Participates in the grievance process. • Processes appeals and cases, ensuring all parties involved adhere to applicable laws, standards, and guidelines.
Recruitment & Staffing *Identifies, attracts, selects, and places individuals to address organizational needs.* Learning and Development Resources	• Participates in implementing the recruitment strategy and related recruitment activities. • Provides advice to employees and managers on operational issues in the areas of recruitment, delegated examining, merit promotion, and staffing. • Performed staffing-related activities (e.g., prepares job opportunity announcements, conducts examining process, develops staffing plan, etc.). • Complies with Federal rules and regulations (e.g., EEO/CR) related to hiring authorities and flexibilities. • Identifies barriers (i.e., qualification, geographical, demographic,) to recruitment and placement effectiveness and suggests methods for improvement and implementation.

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HR Data Management *Collects, processes, maintains, transmits, analyzes, and reports data about the agency's human resources programs, using automated systems (e.g., Excel, Access) or business tools (e.g., EmpowHR, NFC, HRLinks).* [Learning and Development Resources](#)	• Enters data into automated systems, ensuring accuracy, integrity, and security. • Processes personnel actions using automated systems. • Queries automated systems to pull data, information, and reports. • Uses qualitative and quantitative methods to assess employee data and uses data analyses in support of employee-related initiatives. • Analyzes reporting requirements and develops reports. • Provides guidance and technical support services to employees and managers utilizing technology-based HR systems.
HR Risk Management and Assurance *Evaluates human resources products and services to determine the effectiveness, efficiency, and compliance with U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) regulations, case law, and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) policy.* [Learning and Development Resources](#)	• Develops effective, valid methods of measurement that provide an accurate assessment of human resources strategy. • Compiles and maintains data related to important human resources metrics. • Analyzes human resources metric data to assess and justify the performance of human resources programs. • Contributes and/or develops reports that assess and justify the performance of human resources programs. • Uses results of human resources metric data analyses to advise on program improvement.

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HR Policy *Develops effective human resource management policies, procedures, and local guidance to ensure the Agency is in compliance with all applicable laws, rules, regulations, and policies.* [Learning and Development Resources](#)	• Interprets legislation to incorporate critical aspects into new or updated policy. • Develops or updates policies and standard operating procedures for HR programs. • Evaluates the impact of new, or changes to existing, HR policies and procedures. • Develops policy and standard operating procedure materials (e.g., National or State Office bulletins, additions to the General Manual, local policy instructions). • Communicates policies and procedures to appropriate parties. • Resolves operating procedures and/or policy issues.
Performance Management & Recognition *Advises on, and performs activities related to performance management, incentives, and the awards & recognition program in order to create a results-oriented culture.* [Learning and Development Resources](#)	• Provides advice to employees and managers regarding the laws, policies, procedures, and tools related to each stage of the performance management cycle. • Develops or implements performance management strategies and tools. • Evaluates, processes, and makes recommendations on award/recognition nomination packages. • Participates in HR administrative/compliance reviews/audits to monitor and evaluate the performance management process.
Change Management *Understands the impact of change on people, processes, procedures, leadership, and organizational culture; advises management on planning, implementing, and evaluating organizational change.* [Learning and Development Resources](#)	• Provides explanations of the different aspects of change management to educate management officials. • Recognizes constraints of various alternatives for change management and recommends common methodologies. • Discusses the communications needs of stakeholders and develops communication plans and materials. • Provides technical guidance on the agency-directed actions (e.g., reduction in force, transfer of function, reorganizations).

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Pay Setting *Implements pay and compensation policies and procedures in accordance with laws, statutes, and regulations.* [Learning and Development Resources](#)	• Sets and adjusts pay for individual employees. • Identifies and resolves pay setting and leave errors, discrepancies, and disputes. • Provides advice and guidance to employees and managers on pay, leave, and hours of duty policies, procedures, laws, and regulations.
Employee Benefits *Implements and monitors benefits programs (e.g., health and life insurance, retirement, injury compensation, safety and health, work-life balance, employee assistance) in accordance with policies, procedures, laws, statutes, and regulations.* [Learning and Development Resources](#)	• Reviews, verifies, and ensures processing of benefits forms and claims (e.g., retirement, pay, health, life, OWCP). • Identifies and resolves issues related to benefit entitlements (e.g., retirement, injury compensation issues, limited duty options). • Analyzes benefits policies, procedures, laws, and regulations to determine how they should be implemented and their impact. • Provides information to employees, managers, and beneficiaries, and advises them on benefits, associated options, and on interpretation of law, regulations, and policies.
HR Information Management Systems (HRIMS) *Provides technical and automated solutions to meet business requirements; identifies and analyzes HR processes and HR service delivery systems, translating functional requirements into technical requirements and delivering and maintaining HR information systems.* [Learning and Development Resources](#)	• Identifies system requirements for retrieving data from automated HR systems. • Identifies and recommends areas where automation can eliminate labor-intensive HR systems. • Translates HR information into terms understandable by computer Masters. • Evaluates new HR software to ensure it meets the organization's needs. • Identifies and corrects system issues. • Identifies workforce intelligence and analytics to solve problems.

Special Emphasis Programs (SEPs) *Ensures a diverse workforce by eliminating barriers to employment or retention of under-represented groups, and supporting an atmosphere of inclusion.* Learning and Development Resources	• Markets the use and benefits of SEPs. • Coordinates and advertises SEP observances. • Conducts barrier analyses and recommends solutions to any identified issues with regard to the recruitment or retention of underrepresented groups. • Develops partnerships with organizations to support SEPs.

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HR Assistant Competency Proficiency Requirements

The tables below present the proficiency levels required at each grade of the HR Assistant occupation at NRCS. This table on this page presents the occupation-specific competency proficiency requirements. The table on the next page presents the foundational competency proficiency requirements. The proficiency requirements were established and validated by NRCS subject matter experts using the following scale:

- Level 5 = Expert
- Level 4 = Advanced
- Level 3 = Fully Proficient
- Level 2 = Basic
- Level 1 = Awareness

A full description of the proficiency levels can be found in Appendix A. Competency Proficiency Scale.

203 – HR Assistant		GS 5	GS 6	GS 7	GS 8	GS 9
Occupation-Specific Competencies	**Classification & Position Management**	2*	2*	3*	3	4
	Employee Development	2*	2*	3*	3*	4*
	Workforce Planning	2*	2*	3*	3	4
	Labor Relations	2*	2*	3*	3	4
	Employee Relations	2*	2*	3*	3	4
	Recruitment & Staffing	2*	2*	3*	3	4
	HR Data Management	2*	2*	3*	3	4
	HR Risk Management and Assurance	2*	2*	3*	3	4
	HR Policy	2*	2*	3*	3*	4*
	Performance Management & Recognition	2*	2*	3*	3	4
	Change Management	2*	2*	3*	3	4
	Pay Setting	2*	2	3	3	4
	Employee Benefits	2*	2*	3*	3	4
	HR Information Management Systems (HRIMS)	2*	2*	3	3	4

* Not required at entry into this position.

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203 – HR Assistant	GS 5	GS 6	GS 7	GS 8	GS 9
Attention To Detail	2	2	3	3	4
Accountability	2	3	3	3	4
Organizing & Prioritizing Work	2	3	3	3	4
Representing The Agency	2	3	3	3	3
Resource Management	2	3	3	3	3
Technology Management	2	3	3	3	3
Organizational Awareness	2	3	3	2	2
Adaptability & Flexibility	2	3	3	3	3
Continuous Learning	2	2	3	3	4
Initiative	2	3	3	3	4
Integrity & Honesty	2	3	3	3	4
Stress Tolerance & Resilience	2	3	3	3	4
Oral Communication	2	3	3	3	4
Written Communication	2	3	3	3	4
Influence & Negotiating	2	3	3	3	3
Conflict Management	2	3	3	3	4
Interpersonal Skills	2	3	3	4	4
Teamwork	2	3	3	3	4
Creativity & Innovation	2	3	3	3	3
Decisive Judgment & Decision Making	2	3	3	3	4
Information Management	2	3	3	3	4
Problem Solving	2	3	3	3	4
Customer Service	2	3	3	4	5

Foundational Competencies

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Learning and Development Opportunities:

Foundational Competencies

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Foundational Competency: Attention to Detail

Course: Editing and Proofreading Business Documents			
Description: Have you ever distributed a document or message only to find later that you forgot to include a key point or correct an embarrassing spelling error? Taking the time to edit and proofread your writing will help you produce more focused, polished, and effective business documents. This course describes how to edit and proofread effectively, covering key areas, such as tone, structure, clarity, and accuracy, as well as common grammar, punctuation, and spelling mistakes to watch out for.			
Modality: Web-Based	**Length:** 30 minutes	**Vendor:** SkillSoft	**Cost:** N/A

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Foundational Competency: Accountability

Course: Developing a Personal Accountability Framework

Description: Taking responsibility for meeting your objectives, including deadlines and work targets, is an important component of good business etiquette and demonstrates your attitude of professionalism. While it can be difficult at times, being accountable for delivering on your objectives shows you are reliable, organized, and dedicated to your work. In this course, you'll learn about the importance of personal accountability. You'll also learn strategies for developing a personal accountability framework by setting goals, developing an action plan, managing priorities, and staying focused and energized.

Modality: Web-Based	**Length:** 25 minutes	**Vendor:** SkillSoft	**Cost:** N/A

Course: Becoming Your Own Best Boss

Description: Have you ever thought that you could be the best boss you've ever had? By developing attitudes and skills that empower you, you can manage from within and become your own best boss. Self-empowerment is the process of taking responsibility for your attitudes, behaviors, and actions at work to maximize your effectiveness. As an empowered employee, you will be driven by ownership, initiative, and performance. This course focuses on attitudes and behaviors that promote self-empowerment. It provides strategies for empowering yourself through self-coaching, approaches for developing an entrepreneurial mind-set, and an opportunity to apply a model for self-empowerment to enhance your performance. Applying these approaches will help you become a self-empowered contributor in your organization.

Modality: Web-Based	**Length:** 30 minutes	**Vendor:** SkillSoft	**Cost:** N/A

Course: USDA NRCS Giving and Receiving Feedback

Description: This course will provide the knowledge and skills needed to effectively give and receive feedback in a variety of workplace situations. Upon completion of the training, participants will be able to:
- Define key terms and recognize the principles of effective feedback
- Identify situations where feedback might be appropriate
- Apply frameworks for giving and receiving feedback
- Apply tips essential for effectively giving and receiving feedback

Modality: Web-Based	**Length:** 1.5 hours	**Vendor:** NRCS-NEDC	**Cost:** N/A

Course: Setting Performance Expectations

Description: Setting Performance Expectations explains how to translate generic, higher-level standards in the elements into meaningful expectations for different jobs and individual employees. The course features sample discussions between managers and employees on behavioral performance expectations, illustrating effective and ineffective behaviors.

Modality: Web-Based	**Length:** 1 hour	**Vendor:** HR University (ODNI)	**Cost:** N/A

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Foundational Competency: Organizing & Prioritizing Work

Course: Make the Time You Need: Get Organized

Description: You don't have to manage your time, but the stress and potential for mistakes grows when you don't. To manage time, you need to be organized. In this course, you'll learn strategies for improving your productivity depending on what type of time management personality you have. You'll also learn how to deal with time stealers, create manageable to-do lists, and maintain an organized time management approach.

Modality: Web-Based	**Length:** 30 minutes	**Vendor:** SkillSoft	**Cost:** N/A

Course: Developing a Personal Accountability Framework

Description: Taking responsibility for meeting your objectives, including deadlines and work targets, is an important component of good business etiquette and demonstrates your attitude of professionalism. While it can be difficult at times, being accountable for delivering on your objectives shows you are reliable, organized, and dedicated to your work. In this course, you'll learn about the importance of personal accountability. You'll also learn strategies for developing a personal accountability framework by setting goals, developing an action plan, managing priorities, and staying focused and energized.

Modality: Web-Based	**Length:** 25 minutes	**Vendor:** SkillSoft	**Cost:** N/A

Course: How to Start a Project Right

Description: Set your project up for success. Proper planning dramatically increases your odds of meeting project objectives and coming in on time and under budget. In less than 3 hours, we'll give the tools to initiate a project successfully. We'll show you how to set realistic objectives and accurate baselines for scope, timeline, costs and quality.

Modality: Classroom, Virtual	**Length:** 2 days	**Vendor:** American Management Association	**Cost:** $1,889 per person

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Course: Best Practices for the Multi-Project Manager			
Description: Put the best concepts, tools, and techniques available for multi-project management to work for you and your organization! Ace multiple-project assignments by balancing time and resources. This updated seminar provides you with examples of best practices within the profession. Learn how to develop a culture for consistent, standardized Multi-Project Management (MPM) practices, utilize proven metrics for MPM performance and implement innovative tools and techniques for successful completion of multiple projects.			
Modality: Classroom, Virtual	**Length:** .5 days	**Vendor:** American Management Association	**Cost:** $236 per person

MyNRCSCareer

Foundational Competency: Representing the Agency

Video: Appearances Count			
Description: As federal employees, we are charged with avoiding even the appearance of impropriety. We need to consider how things look to someone from outside the government in order to ensure that we are dealing fairly with everyone. The impartiality regulation, covered in this video, helps us to ensure that consider our connections outside of USDA whenever we make a decision. We will help you understand and navigate this difficult topic.			
Modality: Web-Based Video	**Length:** 15 minutes	**Vendor:** Other USDA Agencies	**Cost:** N/A

Course: Introduction to NRCS			
Description: This is a-self paced program for all new employees to be completed during their first six months of employment. It includes such topics as Mission and History; NRCS Customers and Partners; Employment and Position Classification; Performance Appraisal and Merit Promotion; EEO, Civil Rights; Valuing Diversity; Employee Relations; Safety and Health; Ethics and Conduct; Employee Development and Career Management; and Directives and Records. Upon completion of this programs, participants will be able to: • Describe how NRCS is organized to accomplish our Mission; • Describe how NRCS interacts with other federal, state, and local agencies and others to form partnerships; • Define an NRCS program, and be aware of how programs are created and funded; • Differentiate between competitive and non-competitive promotions; • Be aware of Work Force Diversity; and • Identify where to direct questions pertaining to career advancement, ethics, conduct, safety, and grievance procedures.			
Modality: Web-Based	**Length:** 4 hours	**Vendor:** NRCS-NEDC	**Cost:** N/A

Course: Reputation Management: How Performance + Behavior + Communication Define Us
Description: Our actions and words shape our reputation as individuals, agencies, and the government as a whole. This session will explore the theory behind organizational reputation management and the factors that influence public perception. We'll look at: - How reputation is not a single sliding scale of good and bad   - The importance of Intrinsic identity and how it amplifies the good & bad in our reputations   - How crisis communications levels can rise when reputation is on the line

Modality: Web-Based	Length: 2 hours	Vendor: Departmental Management (DM) (DA)	Cost: N/A

MyNRCSCareer

Foundational Competency: Resource Management

Course: Internal Control & Fraud Prevention Training

Description: The agenda includes a range of timely and valuable information including: fraud detection, data analytics, improper payments and risks with government payment cards. Internal Control & Fraud Prevention Training provides cutting-edge information from highly respected and distinguished industry leaders as well as an unparalleled program in two formats: in-person and virtually.

Modality: Web-based	Length: 2 days	Vendor: NRCS-NEDC	Cost: N/A

Course: Best Practices for the Multi-Project Manager

Description: Put the best concepts, tools, and techniques available for multi-project management to work for you and your organization!

Ace multiple-project assignments by balancing time and resources. This updated seminar provides you with examples of best practices within the profession. Learn how to develop a culture for consistent, standardized Multi-Project Management (MPM) practices, utilize proven metrics for MPM performance, and implement innovative tools and techniques for successful completion of multiple projects.

Modality: Web-based	Length: 2 days	Vendor: American Management Association	Cost: $1,889 per person

Foundational Competency: Technology Management

NRCS does not currently have learning and development resources related to this competency.

MyNRCSCareer

Foundational Competency: Organizational Awareness

Course: Influence Others with Political Savvy
Description: When dealing with power and influence you will inevitably have to navigate political waters. Most everyone knows that 'politics' are a reality in organizations and even if you dislike them, you cannot eliminate them. Just think about those who have position power – chances are they got there not just through their individual know-how, but because they know who's who, how to appeal to them, and how to build coalitions of power and influence. This course addresses what it takes to use political savvy as an aid to influencing without direct authority.

Modality: Web-based	**Length:** 25 minutes	**Vendor:** SkillSoft	**Cost:** N/A

MyNRCSCareer

Foundational Competency: Adaptability & Flexibility

Course: Coping with Conflicting Priorities

Description: Too little time, too many tasks, and everything needs your immediate attention. Sound familiar? This Challenge Series exercise explores the tools and skills needed to manage your time and cope with conflicting priorities.

Modality: Web-based	Length: 15 minutes	Vendor: SkillSoft	Cost: N/A

Course: Seminar - Surviving and Thriving During Transition

Description: Transitions and times of change present significant challenges for managers and leaders. Fear, uncertainty, and doubt are prevalent throughout the organization. Furthermore, there are more questions than answers. Maintaining morale and productivity is very trying. This two-hour seminar will provide valuable tools to help managers and leaders overcome resistance and blind compliance. Leaders will be better-prepared to face this challenging phase and become more successful.

Modality: Classroom, Instructor-Led	Length: 2 hours	Vendor: OCIO	Cost: N/A

Course: Leading Change

Description: This course is a tool that executives can use to practice their leadership skills by leading an organization through a significant transition. During this simulation, executives will be provided with information that they will use to make decisions regarding a change management initiative.

Modality: Classroom, Instructor-Led	Length: 1 hour	Vendor: HR University	Cost: N/A

MyNRCSCareer

Course: Fostering Accountability, Adaptability, and Resilience

Description: Organizations are in a constant state of flux. This can create uncertain, complex, and ambiguous environments for the people who work within them at the individual, team, and organizational level. In order to thrive within a changing environment, leaders at all levels must demonstrate accountability, adaptability, and resilience (AAR). Competency in AAR allows individuals to hold themselves responsible for behaviors and actions, be willing to change as needed, and to acknowledge setbacks and find creative ways to move forward.

While many consider AAR to be innate traits, they can be learned and practiced through application of an AAR model. The AAR model allows participants to further develop their AAR skills—through self-awareness and mindfulness, proactivity, and efficiently managing issues as they arise. The AAR model aids in decision making during fast-paced and uncertain situations.

This course is designed to help participants develop the knowledge and skills needed to systematically conduct AAR on a day-to-day basis. Through interactive activities, self-assessments, and discussions, participants will explore concepts designed to improve their ability to perform well in their role and meet goals in the midst of organizational change and uncertainty.

Modality: Classroom, Instructor-Led	**Length:** 2 days	**Vendor:** Management Concepts	**Cost:** $829* per person (*commercial rate – GSA rate not available)

MyNRCSCareer

Foundational Competency: Continuous Learning

Course: Creating Your Individual Development Plan (IDP)

Description: To guide participants in the development of their Individual Development Plan (IDP) focusing on specific competencies (knowledge and skills) needed to enhance current technical, program and/or leadership competencies, and/or prepare for new responsibilities.

Modality: Web-Based	**Length:** 1 hour	**Vendor:** Other USDA Agencies	**Cost:** N/A

Course: The Power of Forward Thinking

Description: How do you plan to get to the next stage in your career? This workshop will provide opportunities for internalizing your plan and review steps to guide you to your goals.

Modality: Classroom	**Length:** 2 hours	**Vendor:** Other USDA Agencies	**Cost:** N/A

Course: Developing a Plan to Further Your Career

Description: The whole notion of what a career is has changed. You are now responsible for making your own career choices, and it's not always clear which way offers the straightest path toward your goal. This course guides you through the process of taking inventory of your values, interests, skills, and needs. Then based on these findings, you can determine your strengths. This course also provides tips on how to deal with any weaknesses that are holding you back. You will also learn how to develop and implement your action plan to further your career.

Modality: Web-Based	**Length:** 30 minutes	**Vendor:** SkillSoft	**Cost:** N/A

MyNRCSCareer

Course: Coaching and Mentoring for Excellence			
Description: Increasing demands on the Federal workforce are requiring organizations to perform at higher levels with fewer resources and staff. Whether guiding employees to learn skills through on-the-job coaching or mentoring employees through change and transition, coaching and mentoring can improve an organization's ability to succeed. This course explores how to use these important skills to help other develop both technically and as leaders in order to improve their organization's overall performance. Helping employees develop their leadership competencies can increase your organization's success by making them more skilled at what they do and more effective at choosing the right methods to get their jobs done well.			
Modality: Web-Based	**Length:** 3 days	**Vendor:** Office of Personnel Management (OPM)	**Cost:** $2,400 per person

MyNRCSCareer

Foundational Competency: Initiative

Course: Becoming Your Own Best Boss

Description: Have you ever thought that you could be the best boss you've ever had? By developing attitudes and skills that empower you, you can manage from within and become your own best boss. Self-empowerment is the process of taking responsibility for your attitudes, behaviors, and actions at work to maximize your effectiveness. As an empowered employee, you will be driven by ownership, initiative, and performance. This course focuses on attitudes and behaviors that promote self-empowerment. It provides strategies for empowering yourself through self-coaching, approaches for developing an entrepreneurial mind-set, and an opportunity to apply a model for self-empowerment to enhance your performance. Applying these approaches will help you become a self-empowered contributor in your organization.

Modality: Web-Based	**Length:** 30 minutes	**Vendor:** SkillSoft	**Cost:** N/A

Course: Taking On Greater Responsibility: Step-Up Skills for Non-Managers

Description: Do you have what it takes to step up to the plate to lead, work in teams and juggle new assignments with your current responsibilities? What about having a "can-do" attitude that prepares you for additional growth?

Now you can acquire new skills and prepare to make a positive difference at work. In this career development course, you will lay the foundation to achieve good performance now and integrate additional skills to exceed present role expectations. You will develop a customized approach to think strategically, to solve problems and to make sound decisions so you can adapt to change and grab new opportunities.

Modality: Web-Based	**Length:** 2 days	**Vendor:** American Management Association	**Cost:** $1,586 per person

MyNRCSCareer

Foundational Competency: Integrity & Honesty

Course: Avoiding Discrimination Bias: Training and Tips for Managers

Description: Avoiding Discrimination and Bias for Managers presents a compelling business case and strong personal incentive for managers to avoid discrimination in implementing the performance management process. The course describes biases that everyone has and provides strategies that will help managers reduce costly and time consuming employee challenges and promote a positive and productive work environment that keeps everyone focused on the mission.

Modality: Web-Based	**Length:** 45 minutes	**Vendor:** HR University (ODNI)	**Cost:** N/A

Course: Modeling Ethical Behavior

Description: To create an environment of ethical behavior, the entire organization must behave that way. Venkatesh Valluri explains why it's important to model ethical behavior.

Modality: Web-Based	**Length:** 3-4 minutes	**Vendor:** SkillSoft	**Cost:** N/A

Course: Developing Your Business Ethics

Description: It's not always easy to decide between right and wrong at work. Understanding ethics can help you to discern the right thing to do in difficult situations. In this course, you'll learn some basic myths about business ethics, and consider some ethical approaches you could follow at work. You'll also learn about the ethical values that a code of ethical conduct is based on, and learn how to develop a personal code of conduct. You'll explore some obstacles of ethical conduct, and learn strategies for overcoming them. And finally, you'll learn how to make ethically defensible decisions.

Modality: Web-Based	**Length:** 25 minutes	**Vendor:** HR University (ODNI)	**Cost:** N/A

MyNRCSCareer

Foundational Competency: Stress Tolerance & Resilience

Course: Blame Backfires – Conquer Negative Thinking			
Description: Many employees find accepting criticism difficult. This Business Impact details how to handle workplace criticism professionally and effectively.			
Modality: Web-Based	**Length:** 5 minutes	**Vendor:** SkillSoft	**Cost:** N/A

Course: Anger Management: How to Recognize Your Hot Buttons			
Description: This workshop will provide employees with useful tools to recognize the patterns and different levels of anger escalation. It will discuss the types of circumstances that make them angry and management options for dealing with conflict. Participants will learn how to effectively communicate using the "I" messages and other options. The information discussed during this workshop will be beneficial in all facets of life.			
Modality: Web-Based	**Length:** 2 hours	**Vendor:** Other USDA-wide	**Cost:** N/A

Course: Persevering through Setbacks			
Description: Goals begin with good intentions and sincere commitment, but setbacks can quickly erode determination and stall progress. It's at these times that understanding the qualities of perseverance can pay off. It's not enough to simply push ahead. Success hinges on understanding how action, attitude, and self-awareness come together.			
Modality: Web-Based	**Length:** 15 minutes	**Vendor:** SkillSoft	**Cost:** N/A

Course: Managing Pressure and Stress to Optimize Your Performance			
Description: Meeting the challenge of high-pressure situations is a different experience for everyone. You won't always be able to control the external events that lead to pressure, but you can control your reaction, develop a solution, and implement it. In this course, you'll learn about the triggers of stress and how stress can affect you physically, mentally, and emotionally. You'll explore mechanisms for handling pressure and stress in the workplace in order to optimize performance. You'll also learn the ways in which people who possess different work-style types deal with pressure, and finally, you'll learn how to deal with stressed colleagues.			
Modality: Web-Based	**Length:** 25 minutes	**Vendor:** SkillSoft	**Cost:** N/A

MyNRCSCareer

Course: USDA NRCS Giving and Receiving Feedback
Description: This course will provide the knowledge and skills needed to effectively give and receive feedback in a variety of workplace situations. Upon completion of the training, participants will be able to: • Define key terms and recognize the principles of effective feedback • Identify situations where feedback might be appropriate • Apply frameworks for giving and receiving feedback • Apply tips essential for effectively giving and receiving feedback

Modality: Web-Based	**Length:** 1.5 hours	**Vendor:** NRCS-NEDC	**Cost:** N/A

Course: Fostering Accountability, Adaptability, and Resilience
Description: Organizations are in a constant state of flux. This can create uncertain, complex, and ambiguous environments for the people who work within them at the individual, team, and organizational level. In order to thrive within a changing environment, leaders at all levels must demonstrate accountability, adaptability, and resilience (AAR). Competency in AAR allows individuals to hold themselves responsible for behaviors and actions, be willing to change as needed, and to acknowledge setbacks and find creative ways to move forward. While many consider AAR to be innate traits, they can be learned and practiced through application of an AAR model. The AAR model allows participants to further develop their AAR skills—through self-awareness and mindfulness, proactivity, and efficiently managing issues as they arise. The AAR model aids in decision making during fast-paced and uncertain situations. • This course is designed to help participants develop the knowledge and skills needed to systematically conduct AAR on a day-to-day basis. Through interactive activities, self-assessments, and discussions, participants will explore concepts designed to improve their ability to perform well in their role and meet goals in the midst of organizational change and uncertainty.

Modality: Classroom, Instructor-Led	**Length:** 2 days	**Vendor:** Management Concepts	**Cost:** $829* per person (*commercial rate – GSA rate not available)

MyNRCSCareer

Course: Managing Chaos: Tools to Set Priorities and Make Decisions Under Pressure			
Description: Welcome to chaos—otherwise known as the world in which we all work today. Attend this seminar and get proven solutions for managing chaos and minimizing its negative impact. First, you'll discover how you can harness the energy of a dynamic, though often chaotic, work environment and avoid feeling overwhelmed when things start to spin out of control. You'll learn a variety of tools that will help you re-think the way you approach chaos and enable you to leverage resources to help you tackle challenging situations as they arise. Gain hands-on experience applying tools for setting priorities and adjusting to shifting demands with greater clarity. Practice techniques for analyzing and resolving problems and learn to strategically communicate your solutions. You'll leave confident and ready to apply the most appropriate techniques to clarify, alleviate and eliminate chaos within your control—and better manage your reactions to the chaos beyond your control.			
Modality: Classroom, Instructor-Led	**Length:** 2 days	**Vendor:** American Management Association	**Cost:** $1,700 per person

MyNRCSCareer

Foundational Competency: Oral Communication

Course: Become a Great Listener

Description: When communicating, the response from the communication recipient is as important as the message that's given. When you're on the receiving end of a communication, you have the responsibility to be receptive and understand what was intended. This requires two essential skills: listening and questioning. In this course, you'll work on sharpening those skills, as well as getting yourself in the right receptive mind-set for communicating.

Modality: Web-Based	**Length:** 25 minutes	**Vendor:** SkillSoft	**Cost:** N/A

Course: Diplomacy and Tact for Every Day

Description: Imagine a world where people always say what's on their mind with no filters. This is a world where you are informed at a lunch meeting that you have lettuce in your teeth, where it's announced at the staff meeting that a project has been delayed because you forgot to send an e-mail, or where your co-workers openly roll their eyes when you ask a question they think is embarrassingly basic. This is a world without diplomacy and tact. Utilizing Tact and Diplomacy is important when engaging in difficult conversations, but these skills are just as important in our day-to-day work environments. People who communicate with diplomacy and tact will be notable and noticed for their ability to communicate across all levels of an organization in a way that puts people at ease and inspires confidence. In this course, you'll explore diplomacy and tact, and recognize the difference between them and the value they bring to you and your work environment. You'll also review situational awareness, how to choose words to avoid a meltdown, and how to apologize with grace.

Modality: Web-Based	**Length:** 30 minutes	**Vendor:** SkillSoft	**Cost:** N/A

Course: The Art and Science of Communication

Description: There is a science behind communication, including how we react neuro-physiologically to others – their actions, words, tone, and body language. You can develop skills in connecting with others so that your communication intention is clear and understood. There's also an art to communication, allowing your authentic self to shine through and allowing the exchange with another person to unfold naturally. Interpersonal communication is complicated: there's more than just one conversation happening. There is what you're thinking and saying as well as what your audience is thinking and saying. This course will teach you the art and science of communication by discussing how to connect with your audience and how to enhance and strengthen that connection as you communicate.

Modality: Web-Based	**Length:** 20 minutes	**Vendor:** SkillSoft	**Cost:** N/A

My**NRCS**Career

Course: Using Communication Strategies to Bridge Cultural Divides

Description: It takes time to build working relationships with people from other cultures, but it only takes a second to alienate them by accidentally breaking the rules of intercultural protocols. That's why relationships are so important in the current global business context, where you have to share objectives and working space with people with diverse cultural backgrounds. In this course, you will learn about dealing effectively with cultural difference to improve cross-cultural communication and build rapport. You'll also learn about the misunderstandings and behaviors that can hinder good communication and ways to overcome them. Finally, you'll learn strategies to give effective presentations to people from low- and high-context cultures.

Modality: Web-Based	**Length:** 30 minutes	**Vendor:** SkillSoft	**Cost:** N/A

Course: Capturing the Attention of Senior Executives

Description: Does your job require you to communicate critical information to senior executives? Perhaps you have opportunities to influence executive decision making, but don't know how best to deliver your message. In order to make the most of your communication with senior executives, you need to be prepared. In this course, you'll learn how to shape your message so it's communicated clearly. You'll also learn about the principles to follow when approaching communication with senior executives, as well as some important tips on how to build your credibility with those at the senior level. And finally, you'll explore how to approach and plan meetings with senior executives, and how to make your case, whether it's with an elevator pitch or a formal report.

Modality: Web-Based	**Length:** 30 minutes	**Vendor:** SkillSoft	**Cost:** N/A

Course: Briefing and Presentation Skills

Description: Public speaking can feel like a daunting task, but with adequate preparation and time to practice delivery techniques, you can communicate clearly and confidently, anticipate audience needs and questions, and address other fears associated with briefings and presentations. Learn techniques for creating and organizing content, write compelling introductions and clear transitions, and create strong closings that appeal to a variety of audiences. Develop effective messages by applying best practices, including the use of visual aids.

Modality: Classroom, Instructor-Led	**Length:** 3 days	**Vendor:** Management Concepts	**Cost:** Varies

My**NRCS**Career

Course: Leadership Communication			
Description: Become the leader who people want to follow. Focus on one of the most crucial competencies of a good collaborative leader: strong communication. Learn to connect with people to build trust and loyalty, use emotional intelligence to build rapport, how to bridge and leverage cultural and generational distances, and how to use these skills to reach consensus, build teams and develop better workers.			
Modality: Classroom, Instructor-Led	**Length:** 2 days	**Vendor:** Graduate School USA	**Cost:** Varies

MyNRCSCareer

Foundational Competency: Written Communication

Course: Introduction to Plain Language

Description: This course outlines the requirements on public documents created or substantially revised since the creation of the Plain Writing Act in 2010. The course also teaches the basic principles of plain writing, including basic plain language writing and reviewing skills, grammar skills, and presentation and formatting of documents to be viewed by the public.

Modality: Classroom, Instructor-Led	Length: 2 hours	Vendor: Other USDA Agencies	Cost: N/A

Course: Plain Language in Government Writing: A Step-by-Step Guide

Description: Using examples from a variety of federal and state agencies, this practical guide walks you step-by-step through every phase of the writing process, providing tips for improved clarity, conciseness, and completeness.

Modality: Web-Based, Document	Length: N/A	Vendor: SkillSoft	Cost: N/A

Course: Editing and Proofreading Business Documents

Description: Have you ever distributed a document or message only to find later that you forgot to include a key point or correct an embarrassing spelling error? Taking the time to edit and proofread your writing will help you produce more focused, polished, and effective business documents. This course describes how to edit and proofread effectively, covering key areas, such as tone, structure, clarity, and accuracy, as well as common grammar, punctuation, and spelling mistakes to watch out for.

Modality: Web-Based	Length: 30 minutes	Vendor: SkillSoft	Cost: N/A

Course: Audience and Purpose in Business Writing

Description: To write effective and appropriate business messages, you need to know your audience and your purpose. In this course, you'll discover how to identify your readers and create messages that convey the appropriate tone for different reader roles. You'll also explore how to write effectively for the three most common purposes: to inform, respond, or persuade.

Modality: Web-Based	Length: 25 minutes	Vendor: SkillSoft	Cost: N/A

MyNRCSCareer

Course: Improving Your Technical Writing Skills
Description: Technical writing is a skill. It involves producing technical documents that are suited to the requirements, comprehension level, and background of its readers. In this course, you'll learn how to avoid common writing pitfalls, and how to structure your writing effectively. You'll find out how to tailor your writing to the specific requirements of different types of technical material – so that whether you want to persuade or to instruct, you'll be able to achieve your writing goals.

Modality: Web-Based	**Length:** 20 minutes	**Vendor:** SkillSoft	**Cost:** N/A

Course: Effective Technical Writing
Description: Technical writing is unique because of its specialized content. It must convey objectivity and reach both technical and nontechnical audiences with exactness and clarity. Along with writing emails, letters and reports, the technical writer must be able to prepare definitions, physical descriptions, product specifications, procedures, test and laboratory results, and many other kinds of documents. This seminar offers you a battery of tools and techniques to help you jumpstart the writing process on any challenging technical writing endeavor. You will learn ways to defeat writer's block, procrastination and writer's anxiety, as well as how to develop a better understanding of readers' needs and expectations. You will also discover principles and approaches that cover a broad range of industries and topics and get hands-on experience improving your technical writing ESP—efficiency, sufficiency and proficiency. In addition, you will receive expert feedback on your work from an experienced writing consultant to help fine-tune your new skills.

Modality: Classroom, Instructor-Led	**Length:** 3 days	**Vendor:** American Management Association (AMA)	**Cost:** $1,984 per person

MyNRCSCareer

Foundational Competency: Influence & Negotiating

Course: You and Your Negotiating Counterpart

Description: We all have emotions, motivations, and unique personalities. You'll need to accept and integrate that into your negotiating strategy. Most people are so busy with their own interests that they do not fully realize the other person's issues. This course will help you build critical components of a good negotiating relationship, including mutual trust, a deeper understanding of where your negotiation counterpart is coming from, a set of techniques to use when faced with different personalities, and a plan for getting them to come along with you.

| **Modality:** Web-Based | **Length:** 30 minutes | **Vendor:** SkillSoft | **Cost:** N/A |

Course: Reaching a Negotiated Agreement

Description: At this point in the negotiation, you've done what you can to establish a trusting relationship, kept focused on the issues, and adapted your approach to optimize your influence with your counterpart. The finish line may be in sight, but it's not yet a guarantee. The object of negotiation is to come to and confirm an agreement. When you started the negotiation, you asked questions. At this point you're focusing on the answers. In this course, you'll learn how to think creatively about solutions to maximize your chances of arriving at a mutually beneficial agreement with your negotiating counterpart. You'll also learn how to facilitate that agreement – even amid resistance from the other party.

| **Modality:** Web-Based | **Length:** 30 minutes | **Vendor:** SkillSoft | **Cost:** N/A |

Course: Influencing Skills

Description: Influencing Skills is designed for professionals who want to expand their personal influence within their organization, learn to overcome obstacles, and discover influencing strategies to help build relationships. Through highly interactive activities and discussions, participants learn how to assess influence situations, practice using a variety of influencing behaviors, and build networks. During the course, participants apply learned skills to current work-related influence challenges.

| **Modality:** Classroom, Instructor-Led | **Length:** 2 days | **Vendor:** Management Concepts | **Cost:** Varies |

MyNRCSCareer

Course: Negotiation Skills			
Description: Negotiation comes with a negative connotation when associated with manipulation, chiseling, and taking advantage of others. However, negotiation has a positive outcome when you seek to understand the interests and goals in play in order to find a mutually beneficial solution. Learn the concept, stages, and elements of a successful negotiation. Through interactive activities, practice applying negotiation skills to a variety of situations in order to develop creative solutions, recover stalled negotiations, and determine the best alternative to the negotiated agreement (BATNA).			
Modality: Classroom, Instructor-Led	**Length:** 2 days	**Vendor:** Management Concepts	**Cost:** Varies

MyNRCSCareer

Foundational Competency: Conflict Management

Workshop: Keeping Conflict at Bay

Description: This workshop will discuss how conflict attributes to interpersonal dispute, review some of the many sources of conflict, and explore specific strategies to prevent conflict from flaring and resolve it when it occurs.

Modality: Classroom, Instructor-Led	Length: 2 hours	Vendor: Other USDA Agencies	Cost: N/A

Course: Working Out and Through Conflict

Description: When you are dealing with workplace conflict, emotions get stirred up, and many people want conflict to 'go away.' But in most cases it won't go away on its own, so you need to choose a course of action. Sometimes it just means making peace with yourself or a situation. Other times, you may need to make trade-offs. If your choice is to deal with it straight on, you need a process. In this course, you'll learn how to work through conflicts smoothly by using a structured conflict resolution process. You'll also learn about techniques for getting the process back on track if difficulties arise.

Modality: Web-Based	Length: 30 minutes	Vendor: SkillSoft	Cost: N/A

Course: Meeting the Challenge of Workplace Conflict

Description: Conflict in the workplace is inevitable. But that's not always a bad thing. In fact, conflict is often a healthy stimulus to creativity, problem solving, decision making, and growth. However, 'bad' conflict – the kind that hurts people – is destructive and disruptive. Conflict resolution requires a whole set of skills to recognize it, prevent the 'bad' kind of conflict before it gets out of control, to work out and through a conflict situation and to adapt your own conflict style to the situation you're faced with. In this Challenge, you'll need all of those skills to work through a common conflict situation – upholding the mission of your team, while under pressure to give in to the demands of competing priorities.

Modality: Web-Based	Length: 15 minutes	Vendor: SkillSoft	Cost: N/A

Workshop: Conflict: Where There's Smoke... There's Fire

Description: This workshop is strategically designed to examine conflict through a lens of employee engagement and inclusion. This presentation breaks the pattern of focusing on conflict issues only after they've become crises. The topic will reveal the major trends that affect conflict in today's organizations. During the presentation, emphasis will be placed upon the need to anticipate conflict and foster a work environment that maximizes human capacity, enhances organizational capabilities, and considers the total well-being of the organization.

Modality: Classroom, Instructor-Led	Length: 5.5 hours	Vendor: Civil Rights	Cost: N/A

My**NRCS**Career

Course: Resolving Conflict			
Description: This course is designed to identify the nature of conflict and the role conflict plays in an organization. Through highly interactive large and small group activities, self-assessments, and discussion, participants learn how to recognize the constructive and destructive natures of conflict, appropriately react to a conflict situation, effectively communicate through the exchange, and explore methodologies to effectively manage and resolve conflicts. Participants also gain insight into their personal styles for responding to conflicts so they can better understand how to work through conflict and achieve desired outcomes for themselves as well as their organizations.			
Modality: Classroom, Instructor-Led	**Length:** 2 days	**Vendor:** Management Concepts	**Cost:** Varies

MyNRCSCareer

Foundational Competency: Interpersonal Skills

Course: Putting Yourself in the Other Person's Shoes

Description: Putting Yourself in the Other Person's Shoes provides strategies for improving communication by considering and understanding the other person's perspective. The course describes effective communication styles and examines the impact of generational or cultural differences in workplace performance communications.

The course includes the following modules:
- How Filters Clog Communication
- How to Separate Observation from Judgement
- How to Discover Possible Reasons Behind Troubling Behavior
- How to Increase the Amount of Time You Listen vs. Hear
- How to Inspire Those You Work With By Creating Buy-in and Showing Appreciation

Modality: Web-Based	**Length:** 1 hour	**Vendor:** HR University (Office of Personnel Management)	**Cost:** N/A

Course: Building Your Professional Network

Description: A key factor in advancing your career is using good communication skills to build strong professional relationships and maintain an effective business network of contacts. This course provides you with the essential communication skills required to establish a business network and includes strategies for building rapport with new contacts during networking opportunities. It also covers best practices for maintaining your network so that business contacts can help you achieve your career goals.

Modality: Web-Based	**Length:** 25 minutes	**Vendor:** SkillSoft	**Cost:** N/A

Course: Working With You Is Tough

Description: This training focuses on the importance of an interpersonal relationship with your co-workers and how to mitigate destructive patterns they sometimes fall into. Participants will learn how to recognize the symptoms of a negative workplace relationship, the role each of us plays in these situations, how to set boundaries and control your reactions to co-workers who cross those boundaries, and how to "unhook" yourself from difficult interpersonal situations at work.

Modality: Classroom, Instructor-Led	**Length:** 2 hours	**Vendor:** Other USDA-wide	**Cost:** N/A

My**NRCS**Career

Course: Using Communication Strategies to Bridge Cultural Divides

Description: It takes time to build working relationships with people from other cultures, but it only takes a second to alienate them by accidentally breaking the rules of intercultural protocols. That's why relationships are so important in the current global business context, where you have to share objectives and working space with people with diverse cultural backgrounds. In this course, you will learn about dealing effectively with cultural difference to improve cross-cultural communication and build rapport. You'll also learn about the misunderstandings and behaviors that can hinder good communication and ways to overcome them. Finally, you'll learn strategies to give effective presentations to people from low- and high-context cultures.

| **Modality:** Web-Based | **Length:** 30 minutes | **Vendor:** SkillSoft | **Cost:** N/A |

Workshop: Civility and Respect in the Workplace

Description: This workshop will discuss how disrespectful and uncivil behaviors can drain productivity and negatively influence both an organization's bottom line and the overall economy. Interactive discussions will bring an awareness of positive results stemming from respectful behaviors in the workplace and beyond.

| **Modality:** Classroom, Instructor-Led or Web-Based | **Length:** 2 hours | **Vendor:** Civil Rights | **Cost:** N/A |

My**NRCS**Career

Foundational Competency: Teamwork

Course: Strategies for Building a Cohesive Team

Description: Team cohesion, or the strength of the links between team members, determines how effective a team will be, especially in responding to outside pressures. A team has to be cohesive if its members are to function as a unit, working closely and efficiently to achieve common goals. In this course, you'll learn how to build a more cohesive team by focusing on improvements in three areas: communication, cooperation, and trust. You'll learn specific strategies for improving communication and promoting cooperation among team members. You'll also learn what signs suggest a lack of trust on a team and what you can do about this, including specific techniques you can use to build trust.

Modality: Web-Based	Length: 30 minutes	Vendor: SkillSoft	Cost: N/A

Course: Effective Team Communication

Description: It's vital to maintain open, effective communication on a team. However, it's all too easy to adopt bad habits. Without realizing how badly it affects your team, you or another team member may communicate in ways that lead to misunderstandings, cause unnecessary conflict, keep others from having their say, and prevent the team from performing as well as it could. In this course, you'll learn about different verbal barriers to effective team communication and strategies for overcoming them. But speaking is only one part of communication; effective listening is vital too. So you'll also learn about specific active listening techniques that can help you be a better listener.

Modality: Web-Based	Length: 30 minutes	Vendor: SkillSoft	Cost: N/A

MyNRCSCareer

Foundational Competency: Creativity & Innovation

Video: Innovation is Everyone's Job

Description: Innovation includes processes as well as products. Look for processes where people are attached by ego, eliminate or fine-tune any process that does not put the client at the center, and make sure activities are aligned with your firm's strategic direction.

Modality: Web-Based Video	**Length:** <5 minutes	**Vendor:** SkillSoft	**Cost:** N/A

Course: Creative Approaches for Innovative Solutions

Description: Creative Approaches for Innovative Solutions reiterates how pragmatic analysis model (PAM) can be used and, additionally, imbues two more competencies into PAM's steps: Flexibility and Creative Thinking. The addition of these two competencies and their respective behavioral indicators will foster an environment in which critical thinking strategies support creative thinking strategies, and innovative solutions can be formulated, implemented, and evaluated.

Modality: Web-Based	**Length:** 2 hours	**Vendor:** HR University (VA)	**Cost:** N/A

Course: Unleashing Personal and Team Creativity

Description: Believe it or not, everyone has the potential to be creative. If you're struggling to express your creativity then something is getting in the way. The good news is that these barriers can be overcome. At work, it can be especially difficult for individuals to express themselves freely and interact in teams. But with the right approach and techniques, team leaders can provide a safe space that allows everyone to share and contribute their ideas. This course describes personal barriers to creativity and how to overcome them. It provides strategies for enhancing creativity in the workplace. In addition, it outlines key requirements for promoting creativity in a work environment. And it explores techniques for fostering creativity in teams, including brainstorming and role playing.

Modality: Web-Based	**Length:** 30 minutes	**Vendor:** SkillSoft	**Cost:** N/A

Course: Promoting Creative Thinking

Description: Strategic creative thinking is a process, requiring encouragement and the freedom to take risks. This Challenge explores methods for promoting creative thinking in the workplace.

Modality: Web-Based	**Length:** 15 minutes	**Vendor:** SkillSoft	**Cost:** N/A

Course: Creativity and Innovation

Description: This course is designed to provide participants with practical tools and techniques to help them generate and gain support for creativity and innovation in the workplace. Participants will explore the conditions necessary for creativity and

innovation to thrive in the workplace. Through highly interactive group activities, self-assessment, and discussion, participants will practice a wide range of techniques to access their creative capacities, develop persuasive cases in order to implement new ideas, and obtain buy-in for innovation from stakeholders. Participants are strongly encouraged to come to class with a situation (i.e., problem, issue, challenge, or goal) that has them "stuck."

Modality: Classroom, Instructor-Led	Length: 2 days	Vendor: Management Concepts	Cost: Varies

My**NRCS**Career

Foundational Competency: Decisive Judgment & Decision Making

Course: Making and Carrying Out Tough Decisions
Description: You've defined the problem, generated ideas for how to resolve it, and narrowed down your options. The time has come to make a final decision. What do you do? In this course, you'll learn how to make a smart decision by paying attention to key criteria, such as costs, time constraints, and alignment with organizational goals. In addition, you'll find out about different decision-making styles and ways to plan and manage the implementation of a solution. You'll also learn about the importance of evaluating how the implementation went and, last but not least, of celebrating your efforts and accomplishments.

Modality: Web-Based	**Length:** 36 minutes	**Vendor:** SkillSoft	**Cost:** N/A

Course: Problem Solving and Decision Making Workshop
Description: Our classic workshop is the gold standard in critical thinking skills training. The workshop is presented in a live classroom environment by a certified instructor. The workshop helps you learn and apply KT questioning techniques that improve the ability to cut through complex situations, use data effectively, weigh options logically, and act decisively. You will have the opportunity to use your new skills in realistic case studies and to address your own work-related issues. You will learn to maximize your critical thinking skills, systematically organize and prioritize information, set objectives, evaluate alternatives, and analyze impact.

Modality: Classroom, Instructor-Led	**Length:** 8 hours	**Vendor:** NRCS-NEDC	**Cost:** N/A

MyNRCSCareer

Foundational Competency: Information Management

Course: Protecting Personally Identifiable Information

Description: The Personally Identifiable Information (PII) lesson is designed to introduce new United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Agency Privacy Officials and Information System Security Program Managers to what Privacy Act data is and the importance of protecting it. The lesson will also discuss the organizational responsibilities for safeguarding PII, as well as an individual's responsibilities for recognizing and safeguarding protected/sensitive data.

Modality: Web-Based	**Length:** 50 minutes	**Vendor:** USDA	**Cost:** N/A

Course: Informatics 1 – Database Basics

Description: Database Basics covers the concepts of databases work and how they are managed, and how data are extracted. Understanding how databases work will help you get better, more meaningful results from the data you are using.

Modality: Web-Based	**Length:** 30 minutes	**Vendor:** APHIS	**Cost:** N/A

Course: Developing Your Analytical Skills: How to Research and Present Information

Description: When making decisions, how do you assess the credibility of information? Do you conduct research and gather data methodically, or act on instinct and follow the latest trends? Do you know what key questions to ask? Feel confident you're making valid decisions?

Whether you are developing a new product or service, presenting findings on a competitor's product, or deciding how to allocate resources, you need the analytical skills to be able to support your conclusions with valid and credible evidence. In this course, you'll learn the basics to implement a process for data analysis that ensures you're focusing on the most critical information, involving the right people, and conveying your message in terms your audiences will understand.

Modality: Classroom, Instructor-Led	**Length:** 2 days	**Vendor:** American Management Association	**Cost:** $1,785 per person

MyNRCSCareer

Foundational Competency: Problem Solving

Course: Problem Solving: Process, Tools, and Techniques

Description: In personal and professional settings alike, the interrelated tasks of problem solving and decision making are often encountered. This Challenge Series exercise focuses on the process, techniques, and competencies that help create winning solutions.

Modality: Web-Based	**Length:** 15 minutes	**Vendor:** SkillSoft	**Cost:** N/A

Course: Solving Problems: Framing the Problem

Description: Clearly articulating a problem requires asking the right people the right questions. Having all that information will make finding the root cause easier than if you tried to solve the problem in isolation. Framing the problem accurately requires finding out who affects and is impacted by the problem. It also requires identifying the reason(s) the problem exists. In this course, you'll learn how to identify stakeholders and effectively elicit their input. You'll find out how the causes of problems can lie at different levels of the organization, and you'll learn techniques to uncover the root cause.

Modality: Web-Based	**Length:** 30 minutes	**Vendor:** SkillSoft	**Cost:** N/A

Course: Solving Problems: Generating and Evaluating Alternatives

Description: Before generating alternative potential solutions to a problem, it's helpful to have a sense of the 'ideal state' – what the situation would look like if people had a magic wand. This provides some direction to those coming up with new ideas. After all, it's helpful to know if you're heading north or south before leaving your driveway, right? Once ideas and alternatives are on the table, evaluating which ones are the best to implement can be a daunting task. In this course, you'll first learn how to elicit descriptions of ideal states. Next, you'll find out how to use basic techniques for generating and evaluating alternative solutions to a problem. Finally, you'll learn to recognize and avoid common pitfalls that can occur while generating and evaluating alternatives.

Modality: Web-Based	**Length:** 40 minutes	**Vendor:** SkillSoft	**Cost:** N/A

Course: Making and Carrying Out Tough Decisions

Description: You've defined the problem, generated ideas for how to resolve it, and narrowed down your options. The time has come to make a final decision. What do you do? In this course, you'll learn how to make a smart decision by paying attention to key criteria, such as costs, time constraints, and alignment with organizational goals. In addition, you'll find out about different decision-making styles and ways to plan and manage the implementation of a solution. You'll also learn about the importance of evaluating how the implementation went and, last but not least, of celebrating your efforts and accomplishments.

Modality: Web-Based	**Length:** 35 minutes	**Vendor:** SkillSoft	**Cost:** N/A

My**NRCS**Career

Course: Problem Solving and Decision Making Workshop			
Description: Our classic workshop is the gold standard in critical thinking skills training. The workshop is presented in a live classroom environment by a certified instructor. The workshop helps you learn and apply KT questioning techniques that improve the ability to cut through complex situations, use data effectively, weigh options logically, and act decisively. You will have the opportunity to use your new skills in realistic case studies and to address your own work-related issues. You will learn to maximize your critical thinking skills, systematically organize and prioritize information, set objectives, evaluate alternatives, and analyze impact.			
Modality: Classroom, Instructor-Led	**Length:** 8 hours	**Vendor:** NRCS-NEDC	**Cost:** N/A

Course: Pragmatic Problem-Solving			
Description: Pragmatic Problem-Solving introduces the basics of problem-solving through the use of a problem-solving model— the pragmatic analysis model (PAM). PAM is used to frame the content because its steps entail actions that map to both the course objectives and the aforementioned competencies' behavioral indicators. In addition, PAM is as versatile as it is practical, making it an ideal approach for the audience, which is presented with a myriad of problems from day to day on their jobs. The behavioral indicators for the first four competencies identified above fit into the architecture of PAM. In mastering PAM, participants master the behaviors that empower them to analyze and solve moderate-to-complex problems using sound problem analysis, which includes strong attention to detail, reasoning, and strategic thinking.			
Modality: Web-Based	**Length:** 2 hours	**Vendor:** HR University	**Cost:** N/A

MyNRCSCareer

Foundational Competency: Customer Service

Course: Rapport Building in Customer Service

Description: Good customer service and strong customer relationships begin with building rapport. Building rapport requires knowing your customers, understanding their situations, and providing an empathetic ear for them to voice their concerns. In this course, you'll learn how to build rapport with customers by paying close attention to their needs, connecting with them, and being positive. You'll also learn how to empathize with customers by relating your own experiences, reflecting their emotions back to them, and normalizing their difficulties.

Modality: Web-Based	**Length:** 25 minutes	**Vendor:** SkillSoft	**Cost:** N/A

Course: Providing Effective Internal Customer Service

Description: When you do things to help other people within your company do their jobs better, you are providing internal customer service. The quality of that service often has a huge impact on the overall quality of service delivered to external customers. In this course, you'll learn about types of internal customers and how to identify internal customer service relationships. You'll also learn about the importance of getting to know your internal customers, identifying their expectations of you, and taking action on those expectations. Finally, you'll learn guidelines for providing internal customer service.

Modality: Web-Based	**Length:** 30 minutes	**Vendor:** SkillSoft	**Cost:** N/A

Course: Interacting with Customers

Description: Failing to realize the importance of customer service and effective communication can lead to increasingly dissatisfied customers. This course provides valuable advice on how to improve your interactions with customers, including how to overcome barriers to communication as well as how to speak effectively, use vocal cues, and listen actively and use paraphrasing to convey your understanding of the customer's needs.

Modality: Web-Based	**Length:** 30 minutes	**Vendor:** SkillSoft	**Cost:** N/A

MyNRCSCareer

Learning and Development Opportunities:
203 – HR Assistant Occupation-specific
Competencies

MyNRCSCareer

HR Assistant: Classification and Position Management

Course: Returning to Core Competencies			
Description: Every successful company is built on the merit of a product or service. And getting that product or service out into the market requires many interdependent processes some of which are outside the company's central strengths. This Business Impact weighs the benefits of returning to core competencies in light of a planned move into the global market.			
Modality: Web-Based	**Length:** 6 minutes	**Vendor:** SkillSoft	**Cost:** N/A

Course: Position Management and Classification			
Description: This course is intended to: • Emphasize the importance of position management in managing human resources. • Explain the supervisor's role and responsibilities in position management and position classification. • Identify the principles of effective position management. • Explain the position classification system and its importance in managing positions effectively.			
Modality: Web-Based	**Length:** 1 hour	**Vendor:** APHIS	**Cost:** N/A

MyNRCSCareer

HR Assistant: Employee Development

Book: 25 Best Practices in Learning & Talent Development			
Description: Featuring a concise collection of best practices that have been implemented within leading enterprises and business schools around the world; this fresh; new book offers a universe of ideas for all involved in the field of learning and talent development.			
Modality: Web-Based Book	**Length:** N/A	**Vendor:** SkillSoft	**Cost:** N/A

Book: Human Resource Development: Learning and Training for Individuals and Organizations; 2nd Edition			
Description: Clearly structured with detailed sections covering each aspect of the training cycle; this handbook provides both thought-provoking questions and stimulating answers to the key factors in HR development today.			
Modality: Web-Based Book	**Length:** N/A	**Vendor:** SkillSoft	**Cost:** N/A

Book: Managing Employee Development			
Description: A key aspect of managing is developing your employees, which involves not only coordinating their work but also empowering them and providing opportunities for growth. This course details tactical strategies for developing your employees including assessing their development needs. Also covered are methods for creating a development plan with your employees based on their individual requirements, and ways to support the development plan by creating opportunities for practice and growth in skills and abilities. This course also introduces ways to continue supporting employees through follow up and monitoring, and ongoing and timely feedback.			
Modality: Web-Based Book	**Length:** N/A	**Vendor:** SkillSoft	**Cost:** N/A

Book: Managing Talent and Succession Plans: Finding; Developing and Keeping Top Talent			
Description: The My Practical MBA Series provides the latest thinking as well as perennial techniques for a range of business challenges. Nurturing; developing and retaining the most talented people requires constant attention and action in several ways. The checklist in this book explains how to ensure success.			
Modality: Web-Based Book	**Length:** N/A	**Vendor:** SkillSoft	**Cost:** N/A

MyNRCSCareer

HR Assistant: Workforce Planning

Book: Strategic Approaches for Human Capital Management and Development in a Turbulent Economy

Description: An international platform for academics; researchers; lecturers; decision makers; and policy makers; this thorough reference aims to enhance understanding and collaboration in issues of knowledge management and human resource management.

Modality: Web-Based Book	**Length:** N/A	**Vendor:** SkillSoft	**Cost:** N/A

Book: High-Impact Human Capital Strategy

Description: Examining 12 critical forces that must be considered in human capital strategy; this book includes case studies and step-by-step guidelines that help you move beyond hiring-training benefits functions to develop strategies that deliver measurable value in the face of ongoing challenges.

Modality: Web-Based Book	**Length:** N/A	**Vendor:** SkillSoft	**Cost:** N/A

Book: Managing Talent and Succession Plans: Finding; Developing and Keeping Top Talent

Description: The My Practical MBA Series provides the latest thinking as well as perennial techniques for a range of business challenges. Nurturing; developing and retaining the most talented people requires constant attention and action in several ways. The checklist in this book explains how to ensure success.

Modality: Web-Based Book	**Length:** N/A	**Vendor:** SkillSoft	**Cost:** N/A

MyNRCSCareer

HR Assistant: Labor Relations

Course: Employee and Labor Relations: Employment Regulations and Organizational Programs

Description: This course focuses on the federal laws and regulations that affect employee and labor relations. It discusses individual employment rights, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) complaint process, and the role HR plays in the employment litigation process. The course also identifies strategies for facilitating positive employee relations and employee involvement in an organization. Finally, the course outlines methods for evaluating employee relations and the effectiveness of employee relations programs in the organization.

This course helps prepare individuals for the Human Resource Certification Institute's (HRCI) PHR and SPHR certification examinations.

Modality: Web-Based	**Length:** 1.5 hours	**Vendor:** SkillSoft	**Cost:** N/A

Course: Employee and Labor Relations: Behavioral and Disciplinary Issues and Resolution

Description: Positive and constructive relations between employers, employees, and unions are important for the success and growth of any organization. However, it is not uncommon for organizations to come across employee related-behavioral and disciplinary issues that might threaten the positive and productive work environment. This course examines some of the problematic behavior and performance situations and how an organization can work to improve them. The course then presents a process to initiate disciplinary action aimed at giving erring employees a chance to improve and to avoid undesirable employment litigations. The course goes on to discuss the alternative dispute resolution approaches as a way to prevent the escalation of disciplinary actions and termination of employees into lawsuits. The course also discusses the importance and roles of organizational policies, procedures, and work rules and how managers and HR professionals can work to make sure that employees understand and follow them.

This course helps prepare individuals for the Human Resource Certification Institute's (HRCI) PHR and SPHR certification examinations.

Modality: Web-Based	**Length:** 1 hour	**Vendor:** SkillSoft	**Cost:** N/A

MyNRCSCareer

Course: Employee and Labor Relations: Unions and Collective Bargaining

Description: One of the key goals of a labor union is to gain official recognition so that it is entitled to conduct collective bargaining on behalf of its members in a particular bargaining unit. This course examines the unionization process laid out by the National Labor Relations Act. Labor regulations also identify unfair labor practices by employers, such as activities that inhibit employees' effort to unionize, or inhibit their employment rights and conditions of work. Certain unfair labor practices by unions and employees are identified too. The course goes on to discuss the process, subjects of, and approaches for collective bargaining between unions and employers. The course also presents strikes, picketing, and secondary boycotts as the legal means of protest by employees.

This course helps prepare individuals for the Human Resource Certification Institute's (HRCI) PHR and SPHR certification examinations.

| **Modality:** Web-Based | **Length:** 1.5 hours | **Vendor:** SkillSoft | **Cost:** N/A |

MyNRCSCareer

HR Assistant: Employee Relations

Course: Basic Employee Relations Course

Description: The purpose of this course is to improve the effectiveness of entry-level ER Specialists by developing their fundamental skills and the necessary understanding of the field of employee relations.

Modality: Web-Based	**Length:** 4.5 hours	**Vendor:** HR University	**Cost:** N/A

Book: Employee Relations Essentials (2015 Edition)

Description: Providing best practices; case studies; situation analysis and illustrations; as well as frequently asked questions; this manual is an ideal resource for HR Managers; Recruiters; Department Managers; and other company representatives in charge of hiring; employee relations; and terminations.

Modality: Web-Based Book	**Length:** N/A	**Vendor:** SkillSoft	**Cost:** N/A

Course: Maximizing Employee Engagement

Description: This 30 minute course provides supervisors, managers and executives with practical guidance and resources to effectively engage their teams. This highly participatory course is designed to help provide learners with education about employee engagement and its relationship to organizational success, financial performance and employee outcomes such as retention and attraction.

Modality: Web-Based	**Length:** .5 hours	**Vendor:** HR University	**Cost:** N/A

MyNRCSCareer

HR Assistant: Recruitment and Staffing

Course: Strategic Recruitment

Description: Part of the Hiring Excellence Workshop presented by the Office of Personnel Management.

Modality: Web-Based	Length: 1 hour	Vendor: Departmental Management (DM) (DA)	Cost: N/A

Video: Attracting and Retaining Talent

Description: Jobs are getting more complex. Semi- and unskilled jobs are being outsourced, off-shored, or automated. To attract and retain better people, remember that people leave managers; they don't leave organizations.

Modality: Web-Based Video	Length: 6 minutes	Vendor: SkillSoft	Cost: N/A

Video: Hiring and Keeping Good People

Description: Even in a strong employer's market, it's critical that companies position themselves as employers of choice. This Challenge Series exercise explores how organizations can address retention and attraction issues in a crisis situation.

Modality: Web-Based Video	Length: 20 minutes	Vendor: SkillSoft	Cost: N/A

Book: Creative Onboarding Programs: Tools for Energizing Your Orientation Program

Description: Fully updated with new case studies of best practices from successful companies; this multi-phased guide to integrating new employees into an organization redefines the expectations of what effective HR training and succession management can do for your business.

Modality: Web-Based Book	Length: 20 minutes	Vendor: SkillSoft	Cost: N/A

MyNRCSCareer

HR Assistant: HR Data Management

Book: Developing Human Capital: Using Analytics to Plan and Optimize Your Learning and Development Investments			
Description: Providing case studies in which major companies applied human capital analytics to guide people decisions; this is a guidebook for collecting; organizing; and analyzing the data surrounding human capital so you can make the most of your employees' potential.			
Modality: Web-Based Book	**Length:** N/A	**Vendor:** SkillSoft	**Cost:** N/A

Book: Human Capital Analytics: How to Harness the Potential of Your Organization's Greatest Asset			
Description: Providing essential action steps for implementation of advanced analytics on human capital; this book presents an in-depth look at the science of human capital analytics; and provides a framework for using predictive analytics to optimize human capital investments.			
Modality: Web-Based Book	**Length:** N/A	**Vendor:** SkillSoft	**Cost:** N/A

Book: Making Human Capital Analytics Work: Measuring the ROI of Human Capital Processes and Outcomes			
Description: Much more than a guide to using data collection and analysis; this step-by-step guide is a template for spearheading large-scale change in your organization by dramatically influencing your department's overall image within the organization.			
Modality: Web-Based Book	**Length:** N/A	**Vendor:** SkillSoft	**Cost:** N/A

MyNRCSCareer

HR Assistant: HR Risk Management and Assurance

Book: Developing Human Capital: Using Analytics to Plan and Optimize Your Learning and Development Investments
Description: Providing case studies in which major companies applied human capital analytics to guide people decisions; this is a guidebook for collecting; organizing; and analyzing the data surrounding human capital so you can make the most of your employees' potential.

Modality: Web-Based Book	Length: N/A	Vendor: SkillSoft	Cost: N/A

Book: Human Capital Analytics: How to Harness the Potential of Your Organization's Greatest Asset
Description: Providing essential action steps for implementation of advanced analytics on human capital; this book presents an in-depth look at the science of human capital analytics; and provides a framework for using predictive analytics to optimize human capital investments.

Modality: Web-Based Book	Length: N/A	Vendor: SkillSoft	Cost: N/A

Book: Making Human Capital Analytics Work: Measuring the ROI of Human Capital Processes and Outcomes
Description: Much more than a guide to using data collection and analysis; this step-by-step guide is a template for spearheading large-scale change in your organization by dramatically influencing your department's overall image within the organization.

Modality: Web-Based Book	Length: N/A	Vendor: SkillSoft	Cost: N/A

MyNRCSCareer

HR Assistant: HR Policy

Course: Policies for Pay, Leave and Tours of Duty

Description: This course discusses USDA pay, leave, and tours of duty policies. It is intended for supervisors and managers in the Department who are responsible for approving leave and overtime, and for assigning tours of duty

Modality: Web-Based	**Length:** 1 hour	**Vendor:** Departmental Management (DM) (DA)	**Cost:** N/A

Course: Employee and Labor Relations: Employment Regulations and Organizational Programs

Description: This course focuses on the federal laws and regulations that affect employee and labor relations. It discusses individual employment rights, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) complaint process, and the role HR plays in the employment litigation process. The course also identifies strategies for facilitating positive employee relations and employee involvement in an organization. Finally, the course outlines methods for evaluating employee relations and the effectiveness of employee relations programs in the organization.

This course helps prepare individuals for the Human Resource Certification Institute's (HRCI) PHR and SPHR certification examinations.

Modality: Web-Based	**Length:** 1.5 hours	**Vendor:** SkillSoft	**Cost:** N/A

Course: Workforce Planning and Employment: Employment Legislation

Description: This course examines employment legislation and regulations regarding strategic workforce planning. It outlines how HR professionals are expected to ensure all workforce planning and employment-related activities comply with key federal laws and regulations. It discusses the development, implementation, and assessment of affirmative action plans and other equal opportunity considerations. It also provides direction on how HR professionals should approach internal staffing assessments to help ensure key skills and competencies are catalogued, reviewed for relevance, and tested on a regular basis. Additionally, this course provides instruction on how to gauge the effectiveness of past, current, and future hiring initiatives. The course covers the need for HR professionals to link workforce requirements to an organization's short-term and long-term objectives – for example, how employees contribute to these objectives.

This course also discusses the importance, and use, of workforce planning metrics such as turnover and recruitment statistics.

This course helps prepare individuals for the Human Resource Certification Institute's (HRCI) PHR and SPHR certification examinations.

Modality: Web-Based	**Length:** 1 hours	**Vendor:** SkillSoft	**Cost:** N/A

MyNRCSCareer

HR Assistant: Performance Management and Recognition

Course: Performance Management Overview			
Description: The Performance Management Overview provides an overview of the Performance Management Cycle, describes the importance of open communication between managers/supervisors and employees during the cycle, and outlines, leader, manager/supervisor and employee responsibilities. The course also identifies the performance management modules that will help with each responsibility.			
Modality: Web-Based	**Length:** 30 minutes	**Vendor:** HR University	**Cost:** N/A

Book: Quest for Balance: The Human Element in Performance Management Systems			
Description: The Performance Management Overview provides an overview of the Performance Management Cycle, describes the importance of open communication between managers/supervisors and employees during the cycle, and outlines, leader, manager/supervisor and employee responsibilities. The course also identifies the performance management modules that will help with each responsibility.			
Modality: Web-Based Book	**Length:** N/A	**Vendor:** SkillSoft	**Cost:** N/A

Book: Strategic Reward and Recognition: Improving Employee Performance through Non-Monetary Incentives			
Description: Providing practice examples from all over the world; different sectors; and large and small organizations; this book brings together theory and practice to guide HR professionals; consultants; and senior leaders in developing a clear strategy in developing and implementing the most effective reward programs for their organizations.			
Modality: Web-Based Book	**Length:** N/A	**Vendor:** SkillSoft	**Cost:** N/A

MyNRCSCareer

HR Assistant: Change Management

Video: Managing Change: The Complete Perspective

Description: This course is designed to teach participants how to effectively manage change. It demonstrates how change effects individuals internally and the best methods for leading others through change.

Modality: Web-Based Video	**Length:** 30 minutes	**Vendor:** SkillSoft	**Cost:** N/A

Course: Planning for Change

Description: Failing to plan is planning to fail. Change project managers need to understand the role of the guiding coalition, and the appropriate level of involvement it has based on the rigor of the change project at hand. They also must understand how to assign levels of influence, assess, and interpret stakeholder input. Additionally, you will need to facilitate the creation of a code for change - outlining the behaviors that will support the change and, in some instances, how members of the organization will be held accountable. The correct application of a guiding coalition, stakeholder influence, and a code for change will help make your change effort succeed.

Modality: Web-Based	**Length:** 30 minutes	**Vendor:** SkillSoft	**Cost:** N/A

Course: Implementing and Sustaining Change

Description: Change is hard. As a change leader, you'll bump up against resistance, doubt, discouragement, and apathy that can quickly erode any initial success. Understanding why change is so difficult for people gives you an edge for answering resistance, overcoming skills and information gaps, and moving the organization into a new way of thinking and behaving.

In this course, you will learn how to tie the three keys to sustainable change – discomfort, vision, and skill – to the deployment of change in a manner that succeeds and lasts indefinitely in the future. Discover how to communicate, motivate, and monitor change in order to weave it permanently into the fabric of the organization.

Modality: Web-Based	**Length:** 30 minutes	**Vendor:** SkillSoft	**Cost:** N/A

MyNRCSCareer

HR Assistant: Pay Setting

Course: Pay and Leave Flexibilities for Recruitment and Retention			
Description: This course will illustrate the range of pay and leave flexibilities available to agencies to address their critical employee recruitment and retention needs, coverage and approval requirements for the flexibilities, examples of their use, and resources for additional information.			
Modality: Web-Based	**Length:** 2 hours	**Vendor:** HR University	**Cost:** N/A

Course: Policies for Pay, Leave and Tours of Duty			
Description: This course discusses USDA pay, leave, and tours of duty policies. It is intended for supervisors and managers in the Department who are responsible for approving leave and overtime, and for assigning tours of duty.			
Modality: Web-Based	**Length:** 1 hour	**Vendor:** Departmental Management (DM) (DA)	**Cost:** N/A

MyNRCSCareer

HR Assistant: Employee Benefits

Course: Pay and Leave Flexibilities for Recruitment and Retention			
Description: This course will illustrate the range of pay and leave flexibilities available to agencies to address their critical employee recruitment and retention needs, coverage and approval requirements for the flexibilities, examples of their use, and resources for additional information.			
Modality: Web-Based	**Length:** 2 hours	**Vendor:** HR University	**Cost:** N/A

Course: Policies for Pay, Leave and Tours of Duty			
Description: This course discusses USDA pay, leave, and tours of duty policies. It is intended for supervisors and managers in the Department who are responsible for approving leave and overtime, and for assigning tours of duty.			
Modality: Web-Based	**Length:** 1 hour	**Vendor:** Departmental Management (DM) (DA)	**Cost:** N/A

Course: FMLA Leave and More: An Overview of Legally Protected Leave			
Description: A sick child at home. An accident or injury. A death in the family. Notification to serve on the jury for an upcoming trial. Each of these events is part of life and can temporarily prevent an employee from being able to perform his or her job. Supervisors and managers often find themselves in the position of responding to requests for employee leave as they handle the company's day-to-day operations. It is important for managers and supervisors to understand the basic guidelines for granting leave that are established by the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) and other laws. This course describes the family- and health-related situations that trigger an employee's eligibility to take leave under the FMLA. It also explores the other types of leave which are protected by law and examines the criteria for leave entitlement. This course was developed with subject matter support provided by the Labor & Employment Law Group of the law firm of Baker, Donelson, Bearman, Caldwell & Berkowitz, PC. Please note, however, that the course materials and content are for informational purposes only and do not constitute legal advice. Nothing herein, or in the course materials, shall be construed as professional advice as to any particular situation or constitute a legal opinion with respect to compliance with any federal, state, or local laws. Transmission of the information is not intended to create, and receipt does not constitute, an attorney-client relationship. Readers should not act upon this information without seeking professional counsel. The information contained herein is provided only as general information that may or may not reflect the most current legal developments. This information is not provided in the course of an attorney-client relationship and is not intended to constitute legal advice or to substitute for obtaining legal advice from an attorney licensed in your state.			
Modality: Web-Based	**Length:** 30 minutes	**Vendor:** SkillSoft	**Cost:** N/A

My**NRCS**Career

Course: Fringe Benefits: Maintaining a Competitive Hiring Advantage			
Description: This Business Impact explores the changing landscape of employee remuneration and the role that fringe benefits can play in giving your company a competitive edge.			
Modality: Web-Based	**Length:** 6 minutes	**Vendor:** SkillSoft	**Cost:** N/A

MyNRCSCareer

HR Assistant: HR Information Management Systems (HRIMS)

Course: RD ERecruit Training			
Description: This training will provide a comprehensive look at eRecruit to include building an announcement, applying to a vacancy, reviewing and coding applications, issuing certificates, and auditing certificates. In addition, it will cover position builds, staffing number, and linkage between EmpowHR and eRecruit.			
Modality: VClass	**Length:** 3 hours	**Vendor:** RD	**Cost:** N/A

MyNRCSCareer

HR Assistant: Special Emphasis Programs (SEPs)

Course: Effective Special Emphasis Program Management – Roles and Responsibilities

Description: The purpose of the special emphasis program is to improve diversity and inclusion at NRCS through the determination of barriers and potential barriers and the development strategies to overcome them and then providing this information to leadership. The state level SEPMs help with this process and they need to be trained on how to help with this process.

Modality: Classroom; Instructor-Led	Length: 2 days	Vendor: NRCS	Cost: N/A

Course: Barrier Analysis/EEO Refresher Training

Description: The 2-day EEOC Advanced Barrier Analysis course will cover all aspects of the barrier analysis process to include: legal and public policy foundations; analysis and interpretation of workforce statistics found in MD-715 data tables; trigger and benchmarking identification; barrier analysis investigation; organizing findings and preparing action plans designed to eliminate barriers; and follow-up on the MD-715 reports from previous reporting cycles. The course offers hands-on simulations of actual situations typically encountered in preparing the agency's MD-715 reports. The 1-day EEO Refresher Laws course will update participants on recent developments in federal sector EEO. This course satisfies the EEOC requirements for annual certification.

Modality: Classroom; Instructor-Led	Length: 2 days	Vendor: NRCS-NEDC	Cost: N/A

Course: Veteran Employment Training

Description: This course is intended for agency officials responsible for recruitment and staffing within the Federal government. It will familiarize participants with the Veteran Employment Initiative and how it is beneficial to all parties involved: the HR Professional, the agency, and Veterans seeking Federal employment. This course also explains how certain special appointing authorities can be used to increase the number of Veterans in the workplace and to expedite the hiring process. A glossary, list of resources, and a course navigation help page are provided. The course meets the mandatory training requirements for Human Resource Practitioners and Hiring Managers in accordance with Executive Order 13518.

Modality: Web-Based	Length: 1 hour	Vendor: HR University	Cost: N/A

Book: Disabilities in the Workplace

Description: This report examines how disability rates for adults in their prime working years have risen sharply in the past two decades and the huge issues for employers wrestling with productivity and healthcare costs.

| **Modality:** Web-Based Book | **Length:** N/A | **Vendor:** SkillSoft | **Cost:** N/A |

Course: EEO and Lawful Hiring
Description: As a manager, it is essential to use recruitment strategies that attract the right candidates. But just as important is the avoidance of discrimination, both intentional and unintentional. In this course, you will learn about the Equal Employment Opportunity laws that guide your employer's recruiting efforts and how to help ensure your hiring practices are fair and lawful. This course was developed with subject matter support provided by the Labor, Employment, and Employee Benefits Law Group of the law firm of Sheehan Phinney Bass + Green PA. Please note, however, that the course materials and content are for informational purposes only and do not constitute legal advice. Nothing herein, or in the course materials, shall be construed as professional advice as to any particular situation or constitute a legal opinion with respect to compliance with any federal, state, or local laws. Transmission of the information is not intended to create, and receipt does not constitute, an attorney-client relationship. Readers should not act upon this information without seeking professional counsel. The information contained herein is provided only as general information that may or may not reflect the most current legal developments. This information is not provided in the course of an attorney-client relationship and is not intended to constitute legal advice or to substitute for obtaining legal advice from an attorney licensed in your state.

| **Modality:** Web-Based | **Length:** 30 minutes | **Vendor:** SkillSoft | **Cost:** N/A |

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Appendix A. Competency Proficiency Scale

Proficiency Level	Description
Level 5 **Expert**	• Demonstrates extensive depth and breadth of expertise in advanced concepts and processes. • Applies the competency in highly complex and ambiguous situations within and across disciplines. • Individuals operating at this level of proficiency serve as an acknowledged authority, advisor, and key resource across the agency in relation to this competency.
Level 4 **Advanced**	• Demonstrates extensive understanding of advanced concepts and processes. • Applies the competency in complex and unstructured situations. • Individuals operating at this level of proficiency seek guidance as needed and serve as a resource to others in relation to this competency.
Level 3 **Fully Proficient**	• Demonstrates thorough understanding of core concepts and processes. • Applies the competency in routine and non-routine situations. • Individuals operating at this level of proficiency work independently with minimal guidance and direction to perform tasks associated with this competency.
Level 2 **Basic**	• Demonstrates familiarity of concepts and processes. • Applies the competency to a wide range of routine, structured situations. • Individuals operating at this level of proficiency require regular, specific, guidance to perform tasks associated with this competency.
Level 1 **Awareness**	• Demonstrates a basic awareness of concepts and processes. • Applies the competency in the simplest situations. • Individuals operating at this level of proficiency require close and extensive guidance to perform tasks associated with this competency.